Case 2674

Monograptus exiguus (Graptolithina): proposed conservation of accepted usage by the citation of Lapworth (1876) as author

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the accepted usage of the Silurian graptolite name *Monograptus exiguus* by the citation of Lapworth (1876) as author, and not Nicholson (1868) who originally established the name.

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1. Nicholson (1868, p. 533, pl. 19, figs. 27–28) described *Graptolites lobiferus* Var. β *exiguus* from the Coniston Flags (Silurian) of Skelgill Beck in the Lake District of Northern England.

2. Lapworth (1876, p. 503, pl. 20, figs. 6a–b) described specimens which he called *Monograptus exiguus* Nicholson and illustrated one specimen from beds of the Gala Group at Caddonfoot, South Scotland. Lapworth's specimens, however, are of a different and stratigraphically younger species than the specimens described and illustrated by Nicholson.

3. Elles & Wood (1913, pp. 453–454, pl. 46, figs. 1a–d), in their *Monograph of British Graptolites*, used Lapworth's specimens for their description and figures of *Monograptus exiguus*. This monograph became the standard guide for graptolite identification for the following 50 years, and is still widely used.

4. All subsequent references to *Monograptus exiguus* are, where correct, to *M. exiguus* sensu Lapworth. A representative list of papers is held by the Secretariat. This includes references from China, U.S.S.R. and several European countries, indicating the degree of international agreement on the identification of Lapworth's species. Although virtually all workers cite Nicholson as the author of the species, none have based their identifications on his description.

5. Strachan (1971, p. 54), in his *Synoptic Supplement to the Monograph of British Graptolites*, which gives details of all known British graptolite type specimens, states that Nicholson's *exiguus* type specimen is 'unlikely to be recognised'. Benton (1979, p. 73), in his catalogue of Nicholson's type and figured material, suggested that specimen BMNH Q96 (in the British Museum (Natural History)) might be Nicholson's figured specimen. This has been examined by me and is a specimen of *Monograptus lobiferus* (McCoy, 1850) s.s.

6. Lapworth's illustrated specimen of *M. exiguus* was identified by Elles & Wood (1913, explanation of pl. 46) as housed in the University of Birmingham. Strachan (1971, p. 93) gave it the registration number BU 1654. I hereby designate this specimen as the lectotype of *Monograptus exiguus* Lapworth, 1876.

7. To use the name *Monograptus exiguus* in any sense other than that used by Lapworth would cause considerable nomenclatural confusion, especially in view of its wide international acceptance.

8. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the subspecific name *exiguus* Nicholson, 1868, as published in the combination *Graptolites lobiferus* Var. β *exiguus*, and all other uses of that name before its publication by Lapworth (1876), for the purposes of both the Principle of Priority and the Principle of Homonymy;

(2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *exiguus* Lapworth, 1876, as published in the binomen *Monograptus exiguus*, and as defined by the lectotype designated in para. 6 above;

(3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *exiguus* Nicholson, 1868, as published in the combination *Graptolites lobiferus* Var. β *exiguus* and as suppressed in (1) above.

References

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